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American College of Surgeons Calls President's Comments about Physicians Ill-Informed

Statement from L.D. Britt, MD, FACS, Chair of the Board of Regents, American College of Surgeons:

"President Obama's unfortunate remarks during his July 22 press conference in which he suggested that a physician's decision to remove a child's tonsils – or any other procedure – is based on making "a lot more money," was ill-informed and dangerous. We were dismayed at this characterization.

Over the past year, the American College of Surgeons has been actively engaged in health care reform discussions. We have participated in good faith with the Administration and Congressional leaders and have come to the table with open minds and an attitude that we are 'all in this together' to fix this hugely complex problem.

As surgeons, we have the enormous privilege of caring for patients everyday, whether it's counseling a woman on her options as she faces breast cancer, saving a person's life as they emerge from a terrible car crash, or restoring a person's mobility by replacing an age-worn hip. But like many Americans, we are deeply concerned that the current system is not sustainable. Certainly from a surgical perspective, we are already seeing serious shortage issues that are hindering patient access to care. Our efforts in health care reform are focused on fixing these problems as well as addressing the long term but equally important issues of quality improvement, patient safety and value exchange."

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About the American College of Surgeons

The American College of Surgeons is a scientific and educational organization of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the care of the surgical patient. The College is dedicated to the ethical and competent practice of surgery. Its achievements have significantly influenced the course of scientific surgery in America and have established it as an important advocate for all surgical patients. The College has more than 74,000 members and is the largest organization of surgeons in the world. For more information, visit www.facs.org.